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Message Text

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64
ACTION AF-18

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FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0291
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3291

CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OBEN, SF
SUBJ: GAO INQUIRY CONCERNING UNISA

REF: STATE 158491

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. ALMOST TWO/THIRDS OF REVENUE FROM GOVERNMENT GRANTS WITH REMAINDER FROM DONATIONS AND STUDENT FEES.

2. UNISA IS AN AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTION CONSTITUTED BY ACT OF PARLIAMENT OF 1916. THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL EDUCATION HAS OVERALL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL UNIVERSITY EDUCATION.

3. THE COUNCIL OF UNISA CONSISTS OF SIX PERSONS APPOINTED BY THE STATE PRESIDENT; NOT MORE THAN FOUR ADDITIONAL PERSONS APPOINTED BY THE STATE PRESIDENT ON RECOMMENDATION OF THE COUNCIL; TWO PRINCIPALS OF OTHER UNIVERSITIES; THE PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY; TWO PERSONS APPOINTED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF PRETORIA; TWO PERSONS REPRESENTING DONORS; TWO PERSONS REPRESENTING ALUMNI; AND FOUR PERSONS CHOSEN BY THE SENATE. THE SENATE IS COMPOSED OF TWO MEMBERS NAMED BY THE COUNCIL; THE PRINCIPAL OF THE UNIVERSITY; AND PROFESSORS WHO ARE HEADS OF
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DEPARTMENTS.

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4. THE COUNCIL THROUGH VARIOUS STANDING COMMITTEES, SUCH AS THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE FINANCE COMMITTEE MAKES OVERALL DECISIONS AFFECTING THE UNIVERSITY. THE SENATE IS PRIMARLY CONCERNED WITH ACADEMIC STANDARDS.

5. UNISA PROVIDES TUITION BY CORRESPONDENCE ONLY, TO SOME 35,000 STUDENTS FROM MANY COUNTRIES, OF WHOM SEVENTEEN PERCENT ARE BLACK, THE REMAINDER WHITE.

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COMMENT:

WHILE UNISA IS THE LARGEST INSTITUTION OF HIGHER LEARNING FOR BLACKS IN SOUTH AFRICA, IT IS NOT A MULTI-RACIAL INSTITUTION IN THE USUAL SENSE: ALL OF ITS OPERATIONS ARE GOVERNED BY SAG NATIONAL POLICIES OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT. SEPARATE FACILITIES ARE MAINTAINED FOR WHITE AND BLACK; THERE ARE NO BLACK LECTURERS, ALTHOUGH SEVERAL HIGHLY QUALIFIED AFRICAN EXPERTS IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES ARE EMPLOYED AS "LABORATORY ASSISTANTS"; VACATION SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS WHO WISH TO ATTEND ARE SEPARATED ACCORDING TO RACE; GRADUATION CEREMONIES ARE SEPARATE FOR VARIOUS RACES, ETC. A FEW FACULTY MEMBERS TRUGGLE AGAINST APPLICATION OF APARTHEID IN THE USE OF THE FILM HALL, THE RESTAURANT, BUT IT IS CLEAR THAT THE DIRECTION OF THE UNIVERSITY IS DETERMINED TO APPLY APARTHEID POLICY IN CONFORMITY WITH SAG NATIONAL POLICY, TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE. DISSIDENT FACULTY MEMBERS STATE THAT UNISA, LIKE MANY MAJOR EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA, IS CONTROLLED BY THE SECRET AFRIKANER ORGANIZATION, THE BROEDERBOND, LED BY THE CURRENT PRINCIPAL WHO SEEKS TO REMOVE DISSIDENTS IN FAVOR OF BROEDERBOND MEMBERS.
THE CONCLUSION IS THAT SAG IS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS RACIAL POLICIES. IT DOES NOT FOLLOW THAT THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS DEEPLY INVOLVED IN THE SETTING OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS, OR IN THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATION OF THE UNIVERSITY. WHILE UNDER THE OVERALL CONTROL OF THE NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THESE ARE THE PROVINCE OF THE COUNCIL AND SENATE, WHICH HAVE SET VERY HIGH STANDARS INDEED. WHILE CONFIDENTIAL

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THERE IS SOME INDEPENDENCE IN THIS REGARD, UNISA MUST COMPETE WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES FOR GOVERNMENT GRANTS, WHICH MILITATES IN FAVOR OF CONFORMITY WITH SAG POLICIES.
WHILE FROM THE ABOVE IT IS CLEAR THAT SAG HAS POWERFUL CONTROL OVER THE UNIVERSITY, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT UNISA CAN BE DESCRIBED AS A TOTALLY SAG ORGANIZATION.
HURD

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